

# What is a Decadal Survey?

- Assess the current status of an entire scientific discipline
- Defines and prioritizes the key scientific questions that could potentially be addressed in the next decade
- Defines and prioritizes the most important initiatives that might be undertaken to address the most important questions
- Are conducted by the National Academies, independently of sponsoring agencies and organizations
- NASA is required by language in the Authorization Acts of 2005 and 2008 to engage with the National Academies and conduct decadal surveys in all major space science disciplines
- Sponsoring Agencies and Congress view decadal surveys as the formal statement of priority by the US space science community, and have repeatedly stated their intent to give highest priority to the missions identified in the survey